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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Powers Out! How long is the food in your refrigerator/freezer safe?

Knox County, IL –Making the right decisions about storing perishable foods during a power outage can keep your family safe, minimize the potential loss of food, and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

When the power is out a full freezer will hold the correct temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full); but ONLY if the door remains closed. However, if electric service will not be restored within one or two days all is not lost.

Keep the freezer door closed. Check with friends and family who have electricity and divide your frozen foods among their freezers. Dry and block ice can be used to keep your freezer at or below 40 °F. Dry ice freezes everything it touches, and 25 pounds will keep a 10-cubic foot freezer below freezing for three to four days. Never touch dry ice with bare hands! AND, never stick your head into a freezer that contains dry ice. It gives off carbon dioxide, which replaces oxygen, so leave the door open a short time before examining your food.

If food from your freezer has thawed and reached a temperature over 41° it should be thrown away immediately to avoid the risk of foodborne illness.

Inside of your refrigerator, you can expect food to stay cold for four to six hours, depending on how warm your home is. Again, keep the door closed as much as possible, and if power is not restored immediately any high protein foods (dairy products, meat, fish, poultry) should be cooked and consumed as soon as possible. Remember that you can add block ice to the refrigerator if the electricity is off longer than four to six hours; however, any foods remaining in your refrigerator for longer than 24 hours, or above 41° should be disposed.

For additional information, contact the Knox County Health Department at (309) 344-2224; or visit www.knoxcountyhealth.org